

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

‘Lenin’s Final Fight’ provides lessons for workers today
—PAGES 8–9

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 74/NO. 15 APRIL 19, 2010

U.S. gov’t, Islamabad press new offensives

BY DOUG NELSON

April 5—The U.S. military is coordinating a massive buildup of troops and matériel in Afghanistan in preparation for a military operation in the southeast province of Kandahar—the next step in a campaign that began mid-February in neighboring Helmand Province. At the same time, the Pakistani government has launched a new offensive of its own in Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas.

Washington is redeploying thousands of troops and one-third of its equipment to Afghanistan from Iraq, where 97,000 U.S. troops are currently assigned.

The plan is to increase U.S. forces in Afghanistan from roughly 75,000 to about 98,000 by August, around the same time U.S. commanders are projecting to complete the initial “clearing phase” of military operations in Kandahar Province, scheduled to begin in June.

In preparation for the offensive,
Continued on page 11

At least 25 miners die in W. Virginia blast

Company has long record of violations



AP Photo/Jeff Genter

Massey Energy’s Upper Big Branch coal mine April 7 during drilling operations to release gas from mine. Two days after explosion four miners were still missing.

BY CINDY JAQUITH

April 7—Massey Energy company’s disregard for miners’ lives, and government refusal to enforce safety laws, are in the spotlight following the April 5 explosion that killed at least 25 coal miners at the Upper Big Branch Mine, in Montcoal, West Virginia. It is the worst U.S. mine disaster in a quarter century.

Federal mine safety officials said the blast at Massey subsidiary Performance Coal, located about 30 miles south of Charleston, was most likely caused by high methane levels. Two miners, who asked to remain anonymous, told the *New York Times* that workers at the mine were evacuated three times in the last 60 days because of dangerous methane levels. This past March inspectors imposed
Continued on page 11

Workers distrust census data collection

BY BEN JOYCE

Many capitalist politicians are campaigning hard to convince working people to participate in the 2010 Census, with assurances the information collected will be kept private. Despite an unprecedented amount of resources devoted to this year’s census, only about half of the forms mailed out were returned by the April 1 deadline.

Given the Census Bureau’s record, the reluctance of working people to give their personal information to the federal government is not surprising.

Census data from 1940 was central in the U.S. government’s herding of 110,000 Japanese Americans into concentration camps during the second imperialist world war. Acting under the Second War Powers Act, the bureau provided other government agencies with a list that included names, addresses, and data on the age, sex, citizenship status, and occupation of many Japanese Americans.

When reports of the bureau’s actions were publicly confirmed in 2007, Christa Jones of the agency’s
Continued on page 3

Cuban youth talk to students and workers in Twin Cities

BY FRANK FORRESTAL AND MAGGIE TROWE

MINNEAPOLIS—Close to 400 people attended gatherings here to meet Cuban youth leaders Yenaivis Fuentes Ascencio and Aníbal Ramos Socarrás and hear them speak about the Cuban Revolution.

They gave presentations at a reception upon their arrival here March 27 and at well-attended meetings at

the University of Minnesota (U of M) and Minneapolis Community Technical College (MCTC), and at a meeting of meat packers and others during their three-day visit.

The two Cuban students are on a monthlong speaking tour to campuses across the United States. The speaking engagements are sponsored by a broad range of academic
Continued on page 7

Washington State: 5 workers killed in refinery explosion

BY EDWIN FRUIT AND CECILIA MORIARITY

ANACORTES, Washington—Five workers were killed and two severely burned from a fire and explosion here at the Tesoro oil refinery April 2.

According to the *Seattle Times*, the early morning explosion “was so violent that many in Anacortes felt the shock wave across Fidalgo Bay. . . . A fireball lit the night sky over the plant.”

Six of the seven victims were members of the United Steelworkers, Local 12-591. Those killed were: Matthew Bowen, 31; Darren Hoines, 43; Daniel Aldridge, 50; Kathryn Powell, 29; and Donna Van Dreumel, 36. Matt Gumbel, 34, and Lew Janz, a supervisor, are in critical condition.

The explosion occurred in the naphtha unit. Naphtha is a volatile, flammable liquid derived during the refining process.

In April 2009 Washington State inspectors cited Tesoro’s Anacortes refinery for 17 “serious” safety violations and more than 130 lesser violations. The company was fined \$85,000.

Last November the state reduced the penalty to \$12,250 and lowered

the number of serious violations to three.

As part of an agreement with the safety agency, Tesoro hired a safety consultant, who visited the plant for the first time last month.

At the Steelworkers union office in Anacortes, Brian Ricks, local financial secretary of Local 12-591, told *Militant* reporters that the union and the company have a safety program that investigates safety problems. When cited for violations, however, the company uses the appeal process to delay corrective action as long as possible.



Militant/Diana Newberry

Delegation from Cuban Federation of University Students (FEU) talks with meat packers and others March 29 at United Food and Commercial Workers Local 789 hall. From left to right: Veronica Mendez, translator, Workers Interfaith Network; Aníbal Ramos Socarrás, FEU; Francisco Segovia, translator, Minnesota Immigrant Rights Coalition (MIRAC); Yenaivis Fuentes Ascencio, FEU; and David Vázquez, Local 789 shop steward.

Also Inside:

Philadelphia hospital ‘trying to break union’	2
U.S. gov’t goal: Increase deportations to 400,000	3
UK elections: Bosses want workers to pay for crisis	5
Cuban students meet Wisconsin dairy farmers	7

Philadelphia hospital ‘trying to break union’

BY JANET POST

PHILADELPHIA—More than 1,500 nurses and other health-care workers went on strike March 31 at Temple University Hospital. They have been without a contract since September 30.

At a March 31 rally organized by the Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals, union members put their hands across their mouths to protest a key issue—the hospital’s proposed “gag clause.” The order says that health-care workers could be disciplined or fined if they publicly “criticize, ridicule, or make any statement which disparages Temple, or any of its affiliates or any of their respective managers or medical staff members.”

“Hey, hey, ho, ho, Temple’s gag clause has got to go!” and “What’s disgusting? Union busting!” were among the chants by striking nurses and health-care workers as they picketed the hospital.

Jackie Yates, a trauma nurse, told the *Militant* that what drove the nurses to strike “was a lack of respect as signified by the gag clause. And they’re trying to break the union.” Other contract issues include pay, health insurance costs, random drug testing, and tuition reimbursement for families.

On the picket line Jackie Yates and Selena Hodge, vice-president of Temple University Hospital Allied Health Professionals, said that hospital officials had blocked efforts to send a small group of trauma nurses to help with Haiti earthquake relief. And

they rejected a proposal by nurses to designate a floor to care for pregnant teens.

Temple University Hospital has hired 850 “replacement” workers through California-based Health-Source Global Staffing, which specializes in strikebreaking. The company Web site includes a U.S. map showing anticipated and current hospital strikes, promising scabs “the highest pay in the industry.” Strikebreakers are offered from \$2,862 to \$10,388 a week, according to company literature obtained by the nurses’ union.

An April 1 memo from Temple management threatened to fire hospital workers who are not on strike if they talk to strikers or “condone or lend support” to the strike. The prohibition applies 24/7, even when off-duty, the hospital bosses said.

Temple students are circulating a petition in support of the strikers and against the gag-rule clause. The nurses have also received support from American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 1723 on the Temple campus and the Temple Association of University Professionals.

Jenny Broz, a student at Temple University, contributed to this article.

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Militant/Janet Post

Striking nurses and other health-care workers picket Temple University Hospital in Philadelphia April 2. Hospital has hired 850 “replacement workers” in union-busting attempt.

Bosses lock out window cleaners in Twin Cities safety, contract fight

BY NATALIE MORRISON

MINNEAPOLIS—Window cleaners set up picket lines and joined protests after bosses at two companies locked them out March 29. Workers say they were told to go home after they complained that ropes and other equipment did not meet safety standards and demanded to see inspection certificates.

Michael LeSage, president of Columbia Building Services, told the *Star Tribune* that he locked the workers out to put pressure on the union to give in to company contract demands. Columbia Building Services and another firm, Final Touch/Marsden Building Maintenance, issued a joint statement saying that they have an “excellent safety record.”

Organized by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), some 50 workers have been without a contract since February. While safety is a major issue, the companies are also demanding pay cuts, according to the union.

“We won’t go back until it’s safe,” Greg Nammacher, secretary-treasurer of SEIU Local 26, told the press.

Three window washers have died on the job here and in nearby St. Paul

over the last three years. One of those, Fidel Sanchez-Flores, fell four stories while clearing snow and ice in 2007.

A press conference and rally was held on April 1 in front of IDS Tower’s Crystal Court, where Sanchez-Flores died. The next day the union held a march and memorial service there attended by 60 people. Derek Eggert, a window cleaner for 16 years, told the *Militant*.

“On many buildings the supports and anchors are unsafe, some are cracked,” Eggert said. “We don’t have the proper tie-backs. Sometimes we have to tie-off on radar dishes and stairwells.”

John Arthurs, a window washer for two years, told the *Militant*, “We want the company to have simple respect for our request so that we can go home to our families at night just like they do. These are minor requests. When we ask to see the inspection certificates for the equipment, we are told ‘that is ridiculous.’”

Window washer Corey Snively said, “We’re making the company thousands and thousands of dollars. They take everything they can from us. They need to give something back.”

THE MILITANT

Ongoing struggle for Black rights

The ‘Militant’ covers fights for Black rights and their importance for advancing the working class in its road to take power out of the hands of the ruling rich. Don’t miss an issue!



AP Photo/News & Record, Lynn Hey

Marchers mark 50th anniversary of civil rights sit-ins in Greensboro, North Carolina, February 1.

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The Militant

Vol. 74/No. 15

Closing news date: April 7, 2010

Editor: Paul Mailhot

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Published weekly except for one week in January and one week in July.

The *Militant* (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018. Telephone: (212) 244-4899

Fax: (212) 244-4947

E-mail: themilitant@mac.com

Website: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the *Militant*, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the *Militant*, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: United States: For one year send \$35 to above address.

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U.S. gov't goal: Increase deportations to 400,000

BY SETH GALINSKY

A recent memo to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) field directors revealed the U.S. government's goal of increasing the deportations of immigrant workers this year.

The February 22 e-mail from James Chaparro, director of ICE Detention and Removal Operations, was released by the *Washington Post* March 27.

Chaparro complained in the memo that currently ICE is deporting 437 people a day, way behind the 2009 average. At the current rate, he wrote, total deportations this year would reach 310,000, less than last year's all-time record of 387,000 and "well under the Agency's goal of 400,000."

The decrease in arrests and deportations so far this year is due to a steep drop in the number of workers without papers entering the United States. Facing high unemployment combined with measures that make it harder for undocumented workers to get jobs, many are opting to stay in their home countries.

In spite of this the deportation director instructed ICE agents to increase noncriminal "alien arrests . . . in every field office."

Responding to complaints about the memo, Assistant Secretary John Morton issued a statement denying that ICE has quotas, saying that "significant" portions of the memo did not reflect agency policy. At the same time he said that "ICE is required by Congress to submit annual performance goals" and the agency would continue "effective immigration enforcement."

ICE claims that its priorities are to "remove serious criminal offenders first." The memo from Chaparro boasted that as of mid-February 56,853 "criminal aliens" had been deported, a 40 percent increase over this same time period last year.

The U.S. government has no intention of deporting most immigrants or undocumented workers. The capitalist class needs a superexploited layer of workers it can use to drive down wages and give it an edge against imperialist rivals and other competitors. By painting many immigrants as criminals they hope to heighten insecurity among immigrants and block

native-born workers from opposing the deportations and raids.

On March 31 ICE announced the extension of the "Secure Communities" program to eight counties in North Carolina and three in Utah. Under the program the fingerprints of every person held for any reason in local, state, or federal jails are checked against FBI and Department of Homeland Security databases. The expansion is another step toward implementing this Orwellian program nationwide.

The intensified measures against immigrant workers are central to the so-called immigration reform proposals promoted by the White House and many Democratic and Republican party politicians.

Mandatory ID for all workers

A key part of the immigration law proposed by senators Charles Schumer and Lindsey Graham includes background checks on any undocumented worker seeking legal status in the United States and the institution of a "forgery-proof" national identity card. An immigration bill by Congressman Luis Gutiérrez includes similar provisions.

The "forgery proof" ID card promoted by Schumer and Graham would contain fingerprints or retinal scans and would be required not just for immigrants but for all of the more than 150 million workers in the United States.

Class conscious workers, as well as many civil liberties groups, know that the ID cards could be used to blacklist workers, unionists, and other political activists.

"The idea [of a national ID card] doesn't fill people with a warm, fuzzy feeling," said Chris Calabrese, a lawyer with the American Civil Liberties Union.

Workers distrust government census effort

Continued from front page

policy office told *USA Today*, "The disclosure of the names was legal at that time." She claimed "the law is very different today."

However, as recently as 2002, acting under the Patriot Act, the bureau sent lists of ZIP codes with high concentrations of Arab residents to the Department of Homeland Security. The department claimed it wanted the information to make better airport signs.

During the first imperialist world war, census data was given to the Justice Department to help round up those who dodged the draft. A few years later, the same was done during the 1919 Palmer Raids, where the FBI deported hundreds of immigrants in an anti-communist witch-hunt.

Liberals, reformists push census

The 2010 census form includes questions like how many people live at your residence, whether you sometimes stay somewhere else, what your phone number is, and other personal matters. Many liberal politicians and their supporters argue that the census will allow accurate statistical representation of oppressed nationalities,



March 27 demonstration in Los Angeles for immigrant rights. Sign calls for legalization and an end to deportations. Government immigration agency wants to increase number of deportations this year over last year's all-time record of 387,000.

In a March 30 article titled "How One Marijuana Cigarette May Lead to Deportation," the *New York Times* describes what happened to Jerry Lemaine, a 28-year-old Haitian who is a legal U.S. resident.

In January 2007 a Long Island cop found *one* marijuana cigarette in Lemaine's pocket. When Lemaine was a teenager a case charging him with possession of a small amount of marijuana had been dismissed. A Legal Aid lawyer told him to plead guilty this time, expecting only a \$100 fine.

Instead, as soon as Lemaine, a New York City resident, pleaded guilty, ICE flew him in shackles to Texas where the courts determined that under federal rulings two convictions for drug possession equal an "aggravated felony" and the dismissal counts as a conviction.

After three years in jail in Texas, including 10 months in solitary confinement, Lemaine was finally granted supervised release while he fights his deportation.

On March 27, one week after more than 100,000 people rallied in Washington, D.C., for immigrant rights, thousands marched through downtown Los Angeles. Many carried signs and banners calling for "Legalization" and opposing immigration raids and deportations.

"I've suffered enough in this country. We're always afraid to drive, that the police will stop us," said construction worker Jaime Mica, who marched with his family. "I've been here 20 years and have two kids. Giving us legalization would be justice."

Immigrant workers are also being hard hit by the economic crisis, he added. "Work is slow," Mica said, and even when there are jobs, more bosses are demanding "papers."

In New York and other cities further actions to demand legalization and an end to deportations are planned for May 1.

Naomi Craine in Los Angeles contributed to this article.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

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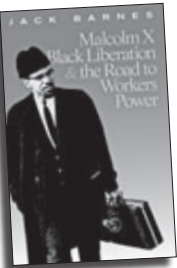
San Francisco
Forty-Ninth Anniversary of Bay of Pigs, Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas: Why Washington's War against Cuba Doesn't End. Speaker: Gerardo Sánchez, Socialist Workers Party. Sun., April 18, 7:30 p.m. 5482 Mission St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

IOWA

Des Moines
The Cuban Revolution: Workers and Farmers in Power. Speaker: Maggie Trowe, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., April 16, 7:30 p.m. 3707 Douglas Ave. Tel.: (515) 255-1707.

NEW YORK

Manhattan
Cuba and the Coming American Revolution. Speaker: Ben Joyce, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., April 16, 8 p.m. 307 W 36th St., 10th floor, north (near 8th Ave.). Tel.: (212) 736-2540.



Sell the book on ‘Workers Power’

New York Subway I

Riding the “3 train” home from a table promoting *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, by Jack Barnes, to workers in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, I noticed a woman intently reading our sign, “Not one penny not one person for Washington’s wars.” We struck up a conversation, and she said she agreed.

I showed her the book and explained to her why the discussion about workers power and Malcolm X was important to workers who oppose Washington’s wars. She immediately took advantage of the special offer for the book and an introductory subscription to the *Militant* for \$15.

—Ruth Robinett

New York Subway II

Talking about *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* on the “A train” recently, we seemed to be waking people up out of the stale evening train ride. One guy tapped my shoulder and asked, “What is that you’re reading and where could I get it?”

I got into conversation with him and before I could finish showing him the pictures, he was reaching for his money.

He was interested that Malcolm X spoke fondly about the *Militant*. He ended up also subscribing to the paper.

After buying the book and paper he told me, “I got caught up with the energy you all displayed in your discussion about the book.” He is a barber and said he “would show the book at the shop.”

—Francisco Cambero

New York Subway III

Recently a group of us were talking on the train going uptown in Manhattan about the response we’ve been getting from workers and students to the *Workers Power* book. A young woman next to me seemed to be paying attention.

One of us asked if she would like to see the book we were talking about. She said, “no,” but then got interested when I started showing her the pictures of the working class and Black struggle depicted in the book. She got the book with the subscription to the *Militant* and said she’d try to come to the meeting on Cuba in Harlem next Monday night.

—Dan Fein



Militant/Eric Simpson

Student buys *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* with a subscription to *Militant* at Salinas, California, protest for immigrant rights March 21.

Libraries are ordering Pathfinder books

BY THERESA KENDRICK

“People are beginning to realize Malcolm X is important to our lives today,” a First Nations reserve librarian remarked during a recent visit. The library in southern Ontario, Canada, ordered seven books, including Pathfinder’s new title *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, by Jack Barnes.

Pathfinder Press sales representatives, in the first joint international effort in the United States and Canada, are visiting bookstores, libraries, colleges, and high schools to win 85 orders. The effort runs from January 1 through May 1. Fifty orders have been turned in to date. *Malcolm X, Black Liberation and the Road to Workers Power*, released in January, is the focus of the drive.

In February *Publisher’s Weekly*, a ma-

jor print and online book trade journal widely read by book buyers, librarians, and others, featured an interview with Pathfinder Press editor Steve Clark. Pathfinder books “are increasingly attractive in a time of crisis,” Clark told the journal. “The capitalist financial system will continue to lead to the devastation of working people and we’re finding that people are responding to our books.”

In Washington State, sales representatives for Pathfinder contacted librarians at the Seattle public library. They purchased four copies of the title for branch libraries. Sales representatives from the Los Angeles area made nine visits re-

cently to San Diego during a two-day regional trip. One public library buyer they met said, “I don’t take meetings with publisher’s reps normally, but I need these books.” Already 26 U.S. libraries have purchased the new book.

The *Midwest Book Review*, a well-known journal providing appraisals of new titles for bookstore buyers and librarians, recently published a review of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*. The reviewer called the book “a powerful and persuasive political testimony, enhanced with black-and-white photographs, a glossary, and an index.”

‘Militant’ fund wins support

BY ERIC SIMPSON

SAN FRANCISCO—Nearly 50 people participated in a spirited meeting here April 3 to help raise funds for the *Militant* fund drive.

James Harris, a national committee member of the Socialist Workers Party, keyed a panel centered on the book *Malcolm X, Black Liberation and the Road to Workers Power*. Panelists Carlos Narváez, a hotel worker and member of UNITE HERE Local 2, and Zach Liddle, a student at San Francisco State University, kicked off the discussion, sharing their enthusiasm for the lessons they have been drawing from reading, studying, and distributing the book.

This interest in the workplace, above all among workers who are Black, reflects what Harris called “the shock” workers feel at the speed with which the U.S. rulers are beginning to take away hard-won gains of the working class, and the conclusion some are beginning to draw that we live under the dictatorship of capital.

“They are working us short shifts, with the minimum number of workers,” Narváez said. “They are trying to break us as a union. It’s the workers who have to take the initiative to fight back. That’s why I came here: to learn more.”

Liddle said he is convinced from studying the book that Malcolm X was on the road to becoming a socialist.

Meeting participants contributed close to \$3,350.

Supporters of the *Militant* in Auckland, New Zealand, launched their fund drive for the paper at an April 1 Militant Labor Forum, writes Mike Tucker. Par-

ticipants pledged \$2,180 toward the New Zealand-wide goal of \$3,000.

The meeting and social also celebrated the opening of a new Militant Labor Forum hall, Pathfinder Books center, and Communist League election campaign office.

New book helps sell subscriptions

BY PAUL MAILHOT

At the end of the third week of the campaign to sell the book *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, by Jack Barnes, with subscriptions to the *Militant*, the drive is nearly on schedule. Some 719 subscriptions have been sold out of the international goal of 2,000. At the same time, 735 books have also been sold.

Supporters of the *Militant* are finding the political discussion with workers and students about the working-class leadership of Malcolm X, and the fight for Black liberation and workers power, is spurring sales of subscriptions.

“We are starting now to get the book into the hands of workers and students in the Boston area,” wrote Kevin Dwire. “We sold one to a coworker at the UNITE union local meeting, and several more were sold at street tables on campuses and in working-class neighborhoods around the city.”

“Perry, a worker at a food distribution warehouse in Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn, recently bought the book from me,” wrote a volunteer in New York City. “He said, ‘I like what Barnes has to say, and I am really into the articles in the *Militant* about strikes around the world. I really enjoy the paper.’”

Readers of the *Militant* are encouraged to join the campaign, and let us know how you are doing.

Campaign to sell ‘Workers Power’ with ‘Militant’ subscriptions March 13–May 12				
Country	Books sold	Subs sold	Subs quota	Subs %
UNITED STATES				
New York	195	151	265	57%
Houston	42	35	65	54%
San Francisco	64	66	150	44%
Philadelphia	31	36	90	40%
Washington, D.C.	49	43	110	39%
Chicago	48	45	120	38%
Seattle	33	34	95	36%
Miami	22	28	80	35%
Twin Cities, MN	49	52	155	34%
Boston	9	19	65	29%
Des Moines, IA	11	33	125	26%
Los Angeles	39	33	130	25%
Atlanta	53	34	140	24%
Total U.S.	645	609	1590	38%
UNITED KINGDOM				
Edinburgh	10	13	30	43%
London	43	25	90	28%
Total U.K.	53	38	120	32%
Canada	13	32	100	32%
New Zealand	11	17	65	26%
Australia	4	12	50	24%
Sweden	9	11	20	55%
Total	735	719	1945	36%
Should be		750	2000	38%

‘Militant’ fund drive March 13–May 12			
Country	Quota	Paid	%
UNITED STATES			
New York	\$19,000	\$7,150	38%
Philadelphia	\$3,700	\$1,350	36%
Twin Cities, MN	\$7,000	\$2,450	35%
San Francisco	\$14,000	\$4,370	31%
Des Moines, IA	\$2,500	\$545	22%
Los Angeles	\$8,700	\$1,745	20%
Atlanta	\$7,800	\$1,415	18%
Boston	\$3,500	\$465	13%
Houston	\$2,500	\$200	8%
Miami	\$3,000	\$110	4%
Chicago	\$9,600	\$310	3%
Seattle	\$8,000	\$175	2%
Washington, D.C.	\$6,500	\$0	0%
Total U.S.	\$95,800	\$20,285	21%
Canada	\$6,650	\$0	0%
New Zealand	\$3,000	\$0	0%
Australia	\$1,500	\$346	23%
UNITED KINGDOM			
Edinburgh	\$300	\$0	0%
London	\$750	\$30	4%
Total U.K.	\$1,050	\$30	3%
Sweden	\$500	\$8	2%
Other		\$225	
Total	\$108,300	\$20,894	19%
Should be	\$110,000	\$41,250	38%

UK elections: Bosses want workers to pay for crisis

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON—As the May 6 general election in the United Kingdom approaches, workers here are facing the worst economic and social crisis in living memory. This reality is being obscured by factional strife between the main capitalist parties, and by official figures that suggest the deepest recession on record—in which the British economy contracted by more than 6 percent—has ended.

The Labour government and its prime minister, Gordon Brown, are taking credit for an economic turnaround. They cite £1 trillion-worth (\$1.52 trillion) of stimulus packages, the nationalization of three major banks and part control of a fourth, low interest rates set by the Bank of England, and fewer unemployed because “of the action that we have taken.” Recovery would be threatened by an election victory for the opposition Conservatives, Brown argues.

In order to gain electoral advantage Labour seized on announcements last year of a Conservative Party—declared “age of austerity” and support for “savage cuts” by the Liberal Democrats to draw working people into backing Labour’s supposedly more humane “hard choices.” But the underlying features of the financial crisis remain and economic contraction will continue, whichever capitalist party wins the election.

Bank lending at record low

The banks made some rapid profits off the government stimulus program. Bank lending, however, which is decisive to economic recovery under capitalism, continues to decline at record levels. Companies facing pressure on profits are reluctant to borrow no matter how cheap the money is. At the same time, banks are refusing to lend, given the perilous state of their finances. One bank, the Royal Bank of Scotland, has bad debts of around £300 billion.

In fact, UK banks are presently calling in more money from businesses than they are lending out.

The stimulus packages have resulted in government debt rising sharply. Government borrowing has climbed to an unprecedented 11.8 percent of gross domestic product.

Credit rating agencies have said that they are considering downgrading the UK’s status, putting the British economy in the same bracket as Greece and Portugal.

In the face of this, both the Labour and Conservative parties have announced that they will drive through public spending cuts.

Trade unionists trying to defend themselves are facing an increasing number of legal challenges to strike action.

Both government and opposition party leaders have denounced striking British Airways cabin crews; simultaneously cranking up the factional attacks on one another. Conservative leader David Cameron has charged that the unions have taken action sensing government weakness. The prime minister replied that days lost due to strike action under Labour is one-tenth of what it was under the

previous Conservative government.

Conservative Party leader Cameron said he was “delighted” by a recent speech by Brown in which he said to immigrants that those “who think they can get away without making a contribution; without respecting our way of life; without honoring the values that make Britain what it is—I have only one message—you are not welcome.”

Such scapegoating is designed to take eyes off the capitalist system as the cause of the crisis facing working people.

The effects of the sharpening economic crisis combined with nationalist appeals in support of the war in Afghanistan and scapegoating of immigrants by the main capitalist parties have also put wind in the sails of rightist groups.

The UK Independence Party, which calls for a five-year freeze on immigration, won 13 seats in the European parliament last year. The ultraright British National Party, which

Communist candidates run in United Kingdom

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON—“Workers and working farmers need to make a revolution here like millions of our brothers and sisters did in Cuba,” said Communist League candidate Paul Davies. “That is the solution to the crisis of the bosses’ system: overthrow their class dictatorship and take state power into our own hands.”

Davies, a meat factory worker in London, is standing in Hackney South and Shoreditch in the May 6 general elections.

Speaking at a campaign forum here April 2, Davies reported back from his visit to picket lines by striking British Airways (BA) cabin crews. Members of the Unite union have been fighting BA’s attempts to increase workload and cut jobs. “They told me that it was through union action over decades that they’d established the conditions that BA is trying to take away,” Davies said.

He urged supporters to join the ef-



Above: PA Wire/Steve Parsons; Inset: Militant/ Ógmundur Jónsson
Picket line March 29 near London’s Heathrow Airport by British Airways cabin crews, who conducted rolling strikes against proposals to increase their workload and cut jobs. Labour and Conservative parties have attacked strikers. Communist League candidate Paul Davies (inset) backs them.

emerged from the neofascist National Front and calls for a ban on all immigration along with “voluntary repatriation,” won two seats in the European parliament and has notched up 46 lo-

cal councillors. A street thug outfit called the English Defence League has organized a country-wide campaign of demonstrations targeting Muslims.

fort to distribute widely the new book *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, by Jack Barnes. So far campaign supporters in Britain have sold 260 copies from street tables, campus sales, at political meetings, and protests against the anti-immigrant group English Defence League.

Davies commented on claims by the Labour government that its cuts are “caring.” He pointed to the government’s drive to push 1 million people off incapacity benefits by 2015. Through appeals to “hard-working families” against the “work shy,” the capitalist parties try to get working people to support cuts in social spending, he said.

The campaign of Caroline Bellamy, the Communist League’s parliamentary candidate from Edinburgh South West in Scotland, was reported in a full-page article in the Edinburgh university newspaper, the *Student*.

Bellamy, who is a factory sewing machine operator, is standing against Alistair Darling, Labour’s chancellor of the exchequer. Darling delivered the government’s budget last month.

“Darling announced a slight reduction in unemployment,” Bellamy said, “but this masks a significant decline in overall employment, an accompanying rise in long-term unemployment, and a nearly 30 percent jump in part-time employment over the previous year.” The number of people classified as “economically inactive” has risen to a record 8.16 million, more than 20 percent of the workforce, while the number employed has fallen to 72.7 percent of the working-age population.

“Over 54,000 people lost their homes last year through mortgage repossessions, while tens of thousands more were forced out of rented accommodation or to sell their homes and rent them back while they can afford to,” she added.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



April 19, 1985

TORONTO—Two thousand supporters of abortion rights jammed into Convocation Hall here at the University of Toronto on March 29. They came to hear a speech by Dr. Henry Morgentaler, the Montreal physician who has been leading the fight for abortion rights by opening clinics in defiance of Canada’s restrictive abortion law.

The mainly young women and men rose to their feet in a prolonged, chanting, footstomping ovation when Morgentaler entered the hall and told the crowd, “The fight is on!”

A sense of victory rang throughout the meeting. Against the efforts of the government, the courts, the police and the “right-to-life” anti-abortion forces, supporters of women’s rights had succeeded in keeping a Toronto abortion clinic open.



April 18, 1960

A community-wide boycott of white business firms was launched in Jackson, Mississippi, April 8, extending the mass struggle for integration to every state in the South.

Racist hopes that mob action, campus expulsions and mass arrests would smash the movement have not been realized. An April 8 Atlanta dispatch in the *Christian Science Monitor* declared: “The Deep South’s millions of Negroes are united as they have never been before, in a militant crusade for social, political and economic rights. . . .

“What in the 1950’s was an anti-segregation fight conducted for the most part by national Negro leaders, with their batteries of strategists and attorneys, is now more of a popular movement of Negro men and women united by catalysts of student rebellion and church fervor.”



April 20, 1935

SACRAMENTO, California—The eight militant workers who were convicted on April 1 of criminal syndicalism were sentenced for indeterminate terms of one to fourteen years by Judge Dal Lemmon last Saturday, after he had denied a motion for a new trial.

Norman Mini, after refusing to apply for probation was asked the usual question whether he could advance any reason why he should not be sentenced.

“Yes,” he said. “Our standing here is no accident. Our conviction is the logic of the class struggle. But the same class struggle that results in our conviction will some day generate an irresistible wave that will sweep everything this court and this State represents away forever. With this knowledge we can face our sentences confidently because we know that the future belongs to us.”

Affirmative action needed to unite toilers

‘We have to straighten out what history has twisted’ —Fidel Castro, 1986

The following is the 13th in a series of excerpts the *Militant* is running from Pathfinder Press’s latest book, *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. We encourage our readers to study and discuss the book. This excerpt is from a presentation Barnes gave at a March 1987 public meeting in Atlanta, which is printed in the book under the title “Malcolm X: Revolutionary Leader of the Working Class.” The footnote used here is printed in the book earlier in the chapter. Fidel Castro’s 1986 speech that Barnes refers to is printed in issue six of *New Internationalist* under the title “Renewal or Death.” *New Internationalist* is a magazine of Marxist politics and theory, distributed by Pathfinder. Copyright © 2009 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



BY JACK BARNES

The volunteer mission in Angola* is having a political impact inside Cuba, as well. That could be seen last year at the Third Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba, where Fidel Castro—in his speech to delegates introducing the newly elected Central Committee—explained that the party had underestimated the legacy of anti-black racism in Cuba, and then outlined further political steps to advance the fight to get rid of the vestiges of racial prejudice and inequality.

Fidel pointed out that blacks in Cuba—those who had been “taken from Africa and enslaved to perform work whites didn’t dare do in this torrid, tropical climate”—had supported the revolution, *overwhelmingly*. The abolition of slavery in Cuba in the latter half of the nineteenth century had been completely intertwined with the struggle against Spanish colonial rule, with blacks serving at all levels in the Cuban Liberation Army (right up to General Antonio Maceo). Nonetheless, under the nominally independent, U.S.-dominated “pseudo

republic,” as it was popularly known in Cuba, blacks had continued to be targets of discrimination, and sometimes outright terror, “because of the color of their skin.”

In stark contrast, the new revolutionary government, starting in January 1959, actively combated racist discrimination. It did so not only through decrees and legislation, but above all through speedy and vigorous enforcement by militias in any store, on any beach, at any social event, at any job interview, or anywhere else blacks or mestizos were denied equal treatment or access. Any and all distinctions based on race were “erased in our constitution and rightly so,” Fidel said.

That the government and party in Cuba sought to be colorblind in how they functioned, however, was not enough by itself to overcome the historic legacy of chattel slavery and racist discrimination, Fidel said. That’s what experience over more than a quarter century in revolutionary Cuba had shown. “We can’t leave it to chance to correct historical injustices,” Fidel told the congress delegates. “To really establish total equality takes more than simply declaring it in law. It has to be promoted in the mass organizations, in the youth organization, in the party. . . . [W]e can’t leave the promotion of women, blacks, and mestizos to chance. It has to be the work of the party; we have to straighten out what history has twisted.”

And world capitalism, for centuries, has twisted everything in its path, including racial differences.

The revolutionary government and party had never asked anyone about their race “and rightly so,” Fidel said. And he pointed to several prominent party leaders who, despite outward appearances, had a black or Chinese grandparent. “Why go around asking such questions? In the past it was to discriminate, today it’s for the opposite reason—so we ask.”

“At issue here is simply the color of skin,” Fidel said. In Cuba, he added, “we are all the product of a mixture



Cuban troops in Angola, 1981, helping defeat invading South African apartheid forces. Victorious internationalist military operation in Angola simultaneously strengthened the democratic revolution against apartheid in South Africa and the socialist revolution inside Cuba.

of races.” Ask the imperialists “if this mixture has been easy to dissolve, divide, or crush. They haven’t been able to do it.” And for exactly that reason, Fidel said, the new Central Committee elected by the congress included—in addition to more workers, “and not just workers who have become leaders but workers from the factory floor”—“a strong injection of women, a strong injection of blacks and of mestizos.”

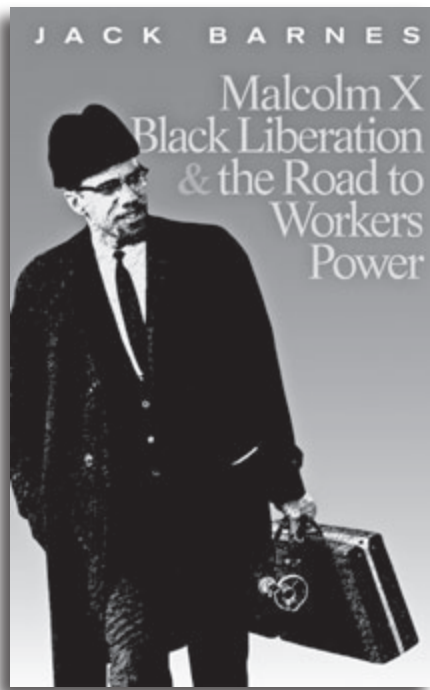
This political advance for the revolution in Cuba is a byproduct, at least in

part, of the impact of the internationalist operation in Angola. It’s an affirmation of what Malcolm was fighting for, and of his confidence in the Cuban Revolution and its leadership. And it’s a verification—for communist workers in the United States and other imperialist countries—of our strategic commitment to affirmative action not as a question of moral witness or sacrifice, but in order *to unite* the working class as a whole to fight more effectively against our common exploiters and oppressors, the capitalist class.

Special offer

Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power

by Jack Barnes



“This is a book about the dictatorship of capital and the road to the dictatorship of the proletariat. A book about the last century and a half of class struggle in the United States—from the Civil War and Radical Reconstruction to today—and the unimpeachable evidence it offers that workers who are Black will comprise a disproportionately weighty part of the ranks and leadership of the mass social movement that will make a proletarian revolution. . . .”

Available for only \$15, or \$10 with *Militant* subscription. Order from one of the distributors listed on page 10.

PathfinderPress.com

* In late 1987, just a few months after this speech was given, what turned out to be the final major battle of the more-than-decade-long war began taking shape in southern Angola, around the hamlet of Cuito Cuanavale. By the end of March 1988, the combined force of Angolan troops, Cuban volunteers, and fighters from the South-West African People’s Organisation of Namibia (SWAPO) had decisively defeated the South African invaders.

Under the impact of the victory at Cuito Cuanavale, the white supremacist regime withdrew its forces from Angola and entered talks with the Cuban and Angolan governments that ended with Pretoria having to recognize the independence of its colony, Namibia. Between the initial battles in late 1975 and the departure of the final Cuban troops in May 1991, 375,000 internationalist volunteers had served in Angola and 2,000 had been killed.

By early 1990, less than two years after Cuito Cuanavale, rising struggles by working people in South Africa forced Pretoria to lift the ban on the African National Congress and release ANC leader Nelson Mandela after al-

most twenty-eight years of imprisonment. The apartheid regime crumbled in face of rising mass protests over the next few years, and in 1994 Mandela was elected president in the first elections ever conducted there on the basis of universal suffrage.

In July 1991 Mandela visited Cuba and spoke along with Fidel Castro to tens of thousands of Cubans and international guests. “The Cuban internationalists have made a contribution to African independence, freedom, and justice, unparalleled for its principled and selfless character,” Mandela said. “. . . Cuito Cuanavale was a milestone in the history of the struggle for southern African liberation! Cuito Cuanavale has been a turning point in the struggle to free the continent and our country from the scourge of apartheid!” Mandela’s speech can be found in *How Far We Slaves Have Come! South Africa and Cuba in Today’s World* (Pathfinder, 1991), pp. 17–28 [2006 printing]; and is excerpted in *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution* (Pathfinder, 2005), pp. 179–82.

Cuban students meet Wisconsin dairy farmers

BY ALYSON KENNEDY
AND BETSY FARLEY

BOAZ, Wisconsin—"I want to welcome our friends from Cuba. I have been to Cuba twice and was so impressed with how well we were treated and how much freedom there is," said John Kinsman, president of Family Farm Defenders. Kinsman was opening a meeting here for Yenaivis Fuentes Ascencio and Aníbal Ramos Socarrás, two Cuban students who are on a speaking tour of the United States.

Some two dozen people, including 10 dairy and vegetable farmers, attended the event, which was chaired by Randy Jasper, a farmer and member of Family Farm Defenders.

Before the meeting, Fuentes and Ramos toured the farm owned by Kevin and Lynn Jasper in Muscoda, Wisconsin, accompanied by several local farmers. As they led the group through the barn of 150 milk cows, the Jaspers explained the operation and the difficult situation facing dairy farmers given the low price of milk.

"For us it is a privilege to be here and learn about your farmers organization," Fuentes told the meeting. "In Cuba there is a strong organization called the National Association of Small Farmers. One of the first conquests of the revolution was to carry out agrarian reform. It was a policy to give land to the peasants."

Before the 1959 revolution "peasants had a difficult situation," noted Ramos. "Today it is a different situation. But we still have problems because of the economic crisis. The principal problem is we haven't been able to put many resources into agricultural development."

"What you do with machines, Cubans have to do with their hands," he said, noting that mechanization in U.S. agriculture is far ahead of Cuba. "In Cuba there is a big discussion about how to produce more so that the majority of food is produced in Cuba. Today the policy is to give land to anyone who wants to work it, to plant, or raise cattle."

To Speak the Truth: Why Washington's 'Cold War' Against Cuba Doesn't End

by Fidel Castro, Che Guevara

In speeches before the UN General Assembly and other UN bodies, Guevara and Castro address the peoples of the world, explaining why the U.S. government fears the example of the socialist revolution in Cuba and why efforts to destroy it will fail. **\$17**

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution

by Jack Barnes

The 1959 Cuban Revolution had a worldwide political impact, including on workers and youth in the imperialist heartland. As the proletarian-based struggle for Black rights was advancing in the U.S., the social transformation fought for and won by Cuban toilers set an example that socialist revolution is not only necessary—it can be made and defended. **\$10**

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In spite of the cross breeding of cows to produce a breed more resistant to Cuba's tropical heat, Cuba still cannot produce enough milk and has to buy expensive powdered milk from Europe and Latin America, Ramos added. "If there was no blockade, we could buy milk from you. You are much closer to us."

During the discussion one farmer asked, "What happens to state land in Cuba?"

State land is being made available to anyone who wants to work it, Ramos said. "If someone lives in the city and wants to farm, they can have land. In the cities there is a project of organic farms for vegetables and fruits."

Joel Greeno, a dairy farmer, said that with "mechanization comes debt, along with debt you become a slave."

Mechanization of industry should never be turned into a tool to exploit the workers or farmers, Ramos said. "We could make more progress in Cuba with increased mechanization. It is very hard for peasants to buy fertilizer and fuel at world market prices, so the government makes it available at subsidized prices."

Fuentes and Ramos also spoke at campus meetings at DePaul and Northeastern Illinois University dur-

Twin Cities: Young Cubans talk with students

Continued from front page
departments, professors, and student groups.

More than 125 people came to hear the Cuban youth at a meeting at MCTC chaired by Spanish professor Darren Witwer, and sponsored by Chicanos Latinos Unidos, the United Nations of Indian Tribes for Education, and the French Club, among others. The meeting was translated into sign language for students with hearing impairment.

At the meeting Ramos described the ceaseless campaign of sabotage and destabilization carried out by Washington since the triumph of the Cuban Revolution over the Batista dictatorship in 1959. When the dictator, his henchmen, and the wealthy Cuban capitalists who supported him fled Cuba, "all of them were given political asylum in the United States," Ramos explained. The U.S. government began the embargo on Cuba—a policy that aimed "to drown and suffocate the revolution."

A student asked whether the current U.S. administration has changed relations with Cuba. "The Obama administration has eased some restrictions on travel and remittances by Cuban Americans," said Fuentes. The visas she and Ramos received signaled that there could be more academic and cultural exchanges. "But the blockade imposed on us for 50 years remains, and those in the United States who have no relatives in Cuba cannot visit the island," she said.

Fight against racial discrimination

At the MCTC meeting, one person said Cubans who are black faced higher unemployment and incarceration rates in Cuba, and asked how the Cuban youth would explain this. "This is a problem that the Cuban people have taken on," Ramos answered, "but it was not created by the revolution. It is the



Zena Jasper

Left to right: farmer Joel Greeno; Cuban student Yenaivis Fuentes; John Kinsman, president of Family Farm Defenders; and Jamie Jasper during tour of Jasper farm April 3.

ing a two-day tour of Chicago, and attended a dinner organized by students at Loyola University.

On March 31 they spoke to more than 160 people from the Chicago metro area at a meeting at DePaul University, including many students and faculty. Organized by the DePaul Alliance for Latino Empowerment, the event was sponsored by a number of academic departments and student organizations.

On April 1 Fuentes and Ramos spoke to 85 students and professors at Northeastern Illinois University.

A protester who identified herself as a member of Ladies in White, an orga-

nization opposed to the Cuban Revolution, stood in the back for the entire event holding a sign. She spoke in the discussion, asserting that the Cuban government holds political prisoners, that students in Cuba only have access to books written by Fidel Castro, and that doctors are exploited and underpaid there.

"The Ladies in White say that they're mothers and wives of political prisoners," Ramos noted. "The fact is anyone can disagree in Cuba, and can freely explain their disagreement," but no one has the right to carry out actions aimed at overthrowing the revolution.

legacy of centuries of colonialism. We are mestizo and black in our majority and have always felt an obligation to eradicate this legacy of oppression.

"The Cuban Revolution has fought for 50 years to improve this situation," he said. "Our policy is not to ignore these problems, it has always been the opposite—to fight to minimize them."

Fuentes and Ramos spoke at two meetings at the University of Minnesota—one organized by the Students' International Health Committee (SIHC) and attended by 70 people, most of them medical students; the other, a meeting of 110 people sponsored by the African Student Association and the Institute of Global Studies.

A lively discussion and debate followed presentations by Fuentes and Ramos at the lunch hour meeting at the medical school.

"Before the triumph of the revolution in 1959 health care was not a right," and the working-class majority received no medical care because they couldn't afford it, Fuentes explained. "Today health care is a right for the whole population."

Many students raised their hands in the discussion. One asked, "What can we in the United States do to work with Cuba to improve health care?"

"We are open to working together," Ramos replied, "but the U.S. embargo on Cuba has impaired our ability to have any real interchange."

"To transform health care," he continued, "it is necessary to revolutionize class relations, and the only way to do that is with a social revolution, a socialist revolution."

A debate broke out in the pages of the *Minnesota Daily*, the University of Minnesota newspaper, when a letter to the editor from Kyle Edwards, one of the tour supporters, titled "Cuba is not the enemy; ignorance is," was published

at the beginning of the tour. Edwards wrote, "Cuba shines as an alternative to capitalism, where wealth concentrates in a few hands and the repercussions are still being felt in our economy, especially with imperialist ventures such as Iraq." He encouraged students to attend the Cuban youth meetings.

The next day U of M medical student Scott Deeney replied in a letter titled "Response to 'Cuba is not the enemy': Cuba and its 'free health care' are failed communist projects." Deeney wrote, "The Cuban people have traded freedom for free health care."

Exchange with union meat packers

Ramos and Fuentes were well received by 40 meat packers and others at the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 789 union hall. Jennifer Christiansen, Local 789 secretary-treasurer, welcomed them to the gathering. Those present included 17 kill floor workers from Dakota Premium Foods, a beef slaughterhouse in South St. Paul.

Over hot dogs and potato chips the workers asked the Cuban youth questions. Thomas Mitchell, a kill floor worker, asked whether workers get paid sick days in Cuba, pointing out that many in the United States, including those at Dakota, get none.

Ramos replied that in Cuba workers "don't lose their job for being sick, and are paid 60 percent of their wages."

Many at the meeting learned for the first time about the case of the Cuban Five, the frame-up of five revolutionaries who kept the Cuban government informed about counterrevolutionary groups planning attacks against Cuba. "The Cuban Five have been in U.S. prisons now for 11 years. We believe the only way they will return to Cuba is if people in this country organize to demand their freedom," Ramos said.

Lenin's political battle to maintain pro

Introduction to new edition of 'Lenin's Final Fight' draws lessons of

Printed below is the first part of the new introduction to Pathfinder Press's 2010 edition of Lenin's Final Fight. The book contains the speeches and writings of V.I. Lenin, central leader of the world's first socialist revolution, during his final political struggle, five years after the victory of the October 1917 revolution. The rest of the introduction will be run in the Militant over the next couple of weeks. Copyright © 2010, Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY JACK BARNES
AND STEVE CLARK

Between late September 1922 and early March 1923, the final months of his active life, Vladimir Lenin led a political battle within the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. At stake was nothing less than whether the party would continue advancing along the political course that had brought the Bolshevik-led workers and peasants of the former tsarist empire to power some five years earlier. That victory had opened the door to the first socialist revolution and ushered in a new historical era with prospects for proletarian-led popular revolution not only in Europe but across Asia and beyond.

There was nothing hypothetical about this battle. Lenin fought to win the party's leadership to implement concrete proposals on matters affecting the lives of tens of millions: control over revenues from the Soviet republic's import and export trade; structural changes to facilitate improving the class composition of state and party bodies; a transformation of the organization of agricultural production and exchange; special steps to guarantee equality of rights and self-determination for nations and nationalities formerly oppressed by the tsarist empire; increased political priority and funding of literacy programs

and schools as part of broader efforts to open education and culture to the toilers and to party cadres working in government bodies; civil treatment of party members and coworkers as an unqualified precondition for leadership.

The battle was not primarily over economic policy or methods of administration. It was a political fight over the class trajectory of the Soviet republic and Communist Party.

Would the proletariat continue to exercise and strengthen its leadership of state institutions, the party, and economic production and planning? Or would this proletarianization be engulfed and overwhelmed by the growth of petty-bourgeois and newly emerging bourgeois layers, especially in trade and farming, and by their representatives—whether unwitting or not—throughout the state and party apparatus?

How could the worker-peasant alliance on which both the proletarian dictatorship and Communist Party rested—and, in fact, the newly formed Communist International, as well—be reinforced? How could that alliance be defended in face of social and economic devastation brought on by civil war and imperialist military intervention? In face of unrelenting pressures resulting from the higher productivity of labor

“The battle was not primarily over economic policy or methods of administration. It was a political fight over class trajectory of the Soviet republic and Communist Party. . .”

in the imperialist countries as reflected through the world capitalist market? How could working-class leadership of that alliance be fortified, and the peasantry's confidence in the proletariat and support for its course toward socialism be broadened and built on?

What steps had to be taken by the working-class vanguard of the revolu-



J. Humbert-Droz Archives

Metalworkers at Putilov factory in Petrograd, Russia, greet delegates to second congress of Communist International, July 1920. Banner reads: “The Third International is the rising sun in a new era of human existence.” Victory of first socialist revolution ushered in new era with prospects for proletarian-led popular revolutions not only in Europe, but across Asia and beyond.

tion and their party to continue marching forward along the road of proletarian internationalism? Why were the attitudes and conduct of the majority Russian cadres and leaders of the Soviet republic toward oppressed nations

the revolution's triumph in October 1917.

Following several new strokes in December 1922, Lenin had to rely on dictation to present his views. Opponents of Lenin's course in the party's Political Bureau sought to take advantage of “doctor's orders” to severely limit his daily dictation and bar him from receiving visitors. Party leaders Lev Kamenev and Nikolai Bukharin, together with the recently elected general secretary of the Central Committee Joseph Stalin, went so far in late December as to issue orders to Lenin's family members and secretaries that they “must not give him political news” in order “to avoid giving Vladimir Ilyich cause for reflection or anxiety.”

Despite these obstacles, and with determined assistance from hard-working and disciplined secretaries, Lenin—in his own hand for as long as he could, and by dictation when that became necessary—conducted the fateful political struggle recorded in his letters, notes, memos, and articles collected in this book.

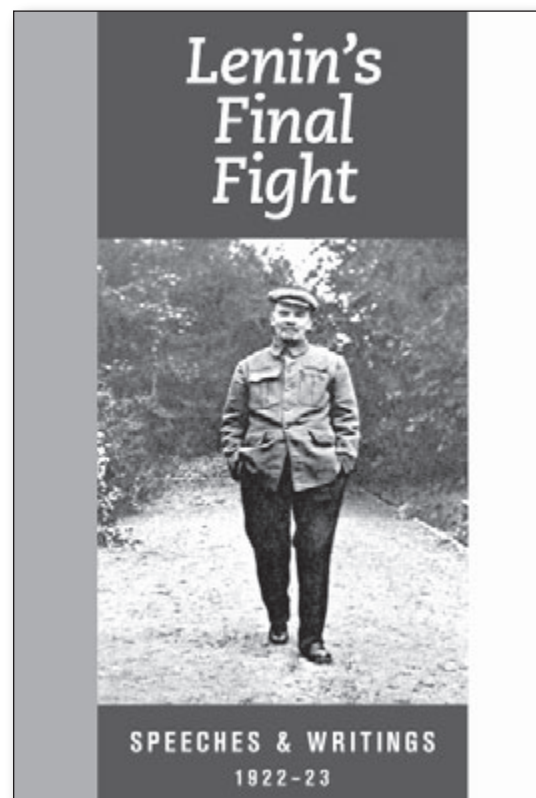
* * *

By late 1920 working people in the young Soviet republic had emerged victorious from nearly three years of a bloody civil war, launched by the combined forces of Russia's toppled landlords and capitalists. That civil war had raged alongside the toilers'

1. Lenin never had any doubt that the political health and vitality of the Communist International largely depended on that of the Soviet republic and Communist Party. In reports to both the third (1921) and fourth (1922) congresses of the Communist International, he placed the policy course of the Soviet party and government before delegates from around the world, soliciting discussion and a vote on their views. See Lenin's theses and report for the third congress on the tactics of the Russian Communist Party, in V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works* (Moscow: 1965), vol. 32, pp. 453–61, 478–96, as well as Lenin's report to the fourth congress, which opens chapter 3 of this book.

2010 edition *Lenin's Final Fight*

With new introduction by Jack Barnes and Steve Clark



“As capitalism in the twenty-first century enters its deepest economic and social crisis since the decades leading from the first to the second imperialist world war, programmatic and strategic matters in dispute in the communist workers movement in the early 1920s once again weigh heavily in prospects for the working class worldwide to advance along its historic line of march toward the conquest of power.”

This book brings together, for the first time, the reports, articles, and letters through which Lenin waged the political battle to keep the revolution on a proletarian course. Many were suppressed for decades, and some have never before appeared in English.

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Proletarian course of Russian Revolution

the working class's historic line of march toward conquest of power

resistance to the invading armies of fourteen imperialist powers, from London and Paris to Tokyo and Washington.

The revolutionary wave that had swept across Europe from 1918 through 1920, under the impulse of the workers and peasants victory in Russia, had been dealt defeats in Germany, Hungary, and Italy. No new soviet republics had been established anywhere outside the boundaries of the old tsarist empire.

The most class-conscious proletarian vanguard of the revolution, the backbone of the Red Army, had suffered devastating casualties from the assaults aimed at restoring bourgeois rule and the old property relations in the Soviet republic. The Communist Party's leading cadres in the industrial working class of Petrograd, Moscow, and other major cities were hit especially hard. Counterrevolutionary armies ravaged the countryside, killing peasants, the big majority of whom had backed the Soviet government in order to block the landlords' return, with many volunteering for the Red Army. At least one million Red Army soldiers died in combat or from disease, and millions of peasants and workers fell to wartime famine and epidemics.

"We live in a country devastated so severely by war, knocked out of anything like the normal course of life, in a country that has suffered and endured so much, that willy-nilly we are beginning all our [economic] calculations with a very, very small percentage" of prewar levels, Lenin told deputies to the Moscow soviet in November 1922. Factory production in 1920 was a third the prewar rate and steel output in 1921 a mere 5 percent of what it had been in 1913. Coal production and rail transport had declined to 30 percent of prewar levels. Average grain output in 1920 and 1921 was about 50 percent of the prewar average, resulting in millions of deaths from starvation in 1921 alone. The imperialist powers imposed what amounted to a virtual boycott of trade and credit on the workers and peasants republic.²

By 1921 the desperate conditions facing working people had produced

"the gravest" crisis in Soviet Russia since the revolution, Lenin told delegates to the fourth congress of the Communist International in November 1922. It "brought to light discontent not only among a considerable section of the peasantry but also among the workers," Lenin said. "This was the first and, I hope, the last time in the history of Soviet Russia that feeling ran against us among large masses of peasants. . . ."

In order to feed working people in city and countryside and restore the peasantry's access to farm implements and light manufactured goods, the Bolshevik leadership implemented a number of postwar economic measures, together called the New Economic Policy (NEP). The Soviet government ended the requisitioning of peasant grain surpluses—an emergency measure adopted during the civil war to feed Red Army soldiers at the front and workers in the cities—and replaced it with what was called a tax in kind. Peasants were taxed a percentage of their harvest, at graduated rates taking the least produce from rural toilers with low incomes.

The government legalized small markets, first for farm products and later for other goods. Privately owned enterprises were permitted in rural and small-scale industry. Foreign capitalists were encouraged to invest in "concessions" in raw materials and industry, operated under government control, although, as Lenin remarked in January 1923, these enterprises had "not developed on any considerable scale."

Lenin and other Bolshevik leaders were well aware that these measures, though necessary to revive production and trade, widened class inequalities between and within the working class and peasantry and generated new petty capitalist layers, especially rich

2. A useful summary of the first five years of the Soviet workers and peasants republic is contained in the two-volume series by Farrell Dobbs, *Revolutionary Continuity: The Early Years (1848–1917)* (New York: Pathfinder, 1980) and *Revolutionary Continuity: Birth of the Communist Movement (1918–1922)* (New York: Pathfinder, 1983).



Humbert-Droz Archives

Workers and soldiers participating in voluntary Saturday labor—Subbotniks—May 1, 1920. "We live in a country devastated so severely by war," Lenin told deputies to the Moscow soviet in November 1922, that "we are beginning all our [economic] calculations with a very, very small percentage" of prewar levels.

peasants and traders. "Nepmen" was the name derisively given by workers and poor peasants to these price-gouging middlemen.

In face of the growth of these layers across the Soviet republic, Lenin—in his report to the March 1922 eleventh Communist Party congress, which begins the book—posed the political question to delegates: "Who will win?" Would the workers and peasants prove capable of defending and advancing their state power? Would they triumph not only over class enemies of the revolution abroad, but above all over rising capitalist layers in their own midst?

"No direct [military] onslaught is being made on us now," Lenin said in the report. "Nobody is clutching us by the throat. . . . Nevertheless, the fight against capitalist society has become a hundred times more fierce and per-

our hands," Lenin continued. The new government had encouraged peasants to expropriate the landlords' estates, nationalized and distributed land to be worked by the tillers themselves, and extended aid and low-cost loans to rural producers. It led workers to take increasing control over the organization of work in factories, mines, and mills, and backed their initiatives to stop factory owners' sabotage of production. As the civil war deepened over the course of 1918, the Soviet government mobilized the working class to expropriate the remaining capitalists, consolidate the state monopoly of foreign trade, and initiate centralized economic planning.

But as Lenin told delegates to the March 1922 party congress, during the NEP's first year, the Soviet state "did not operate in the way we wanted. . . . The machine refused to obey

"Lenin posed the political question to party delegates: 'Who will win?' Would the workers and peasants prove capable of defending and advancing their state power? . . ."

ilous, because we are not always able to tell enemies from friends."

The leadership of the revolutionary government, Lenin said, "must squarely put the question: Wherein lies our strength and what do we lack?"

"We have quite enough political power," Lenin replied. In fact, as a result of the triumph of the working class and peasantry in the October 1917 Bolshevik-led insurrection, he said, "the greatest invention in history has been made; a proletarian type of state has been created." The dictatorship of capital—political rule by a handful of wealthy owners of the land, industry, banks, and major wholesale and retail trade—had been overthrown. Their class dictatorship was replaced by the dictatorship of the proletariat, based on popular councils ("soviets" in the Russian language) of delegates chosen by millions of workers, peasants, soldiers, and sailors in cities, towns, villages, and ports.

"The main economic power is in

the hand that guided it. It was like a car that was not going in the direction the driver desired, but . . . being driven by some mysterious, lawless hand, God knows whose, perhaps of a profiteer, or of a private capitalist, or of both." That's why, while still needing the NEP—it "remains the main, current, and all-embracing slogan of today," he emphasized more than half a year later—Lenin insisted it was time for the party to "call a halt" to further retreat.

If the measures necessary to do so are not taken, Lenin said, "the Communist Party will not lead the proletariat, the proletariat will not lead the masses, and the whole machine will collapse."

It was resistance within the central party leadership to adopting and implementing the measures necessary to halt the retreat that, half a year later, erupted in the multifront political battle by Lenin to reassert the revolution's proletarian course.

(To be continued next week)



Workers in Odessa, Ukraine, greet Red Army as it enters the city liberated from counterrevolutionary forces. By late 1920 working people in the young Soviet republic emerged victorious after nearly three years of civil war launched by Russia's toppled landlords and capitalists.

Rosa Luxemburg on inhumanity of capitalist ‘justice’

Printed below is an excerpt from Rosa Luxemburg Speaks, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for April. A revolutionary situation developed in Germany in late 1918 with councils of workers and soldiers springing up demanding that their authority be recognized. On November 9 a general strike broke out, forcing the government to abdicate. The chancellor, Prince Max of Baden, handed over power to Friedrich Ebert, the leader of the Social Democratic Party (SPD). The monarchy was abolished and a democratic republic proclaimed. Luxemburg was then released from prison. One of the first pieces she then wrote was "Against Capital Punishment," excerpted below. In it she condemns the inhumanity of capitalist "justice" and outlines the humanitarian goals of the socialist revolution and the treatment of prisoners.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

Under orders of the SDP-led government, she and fellow revolutionist Karl Liebknecht were arrested and executed two months later, a blow to the German revolution. Copyright © 1970 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY ROSA LUXEMBURG

We did not wish for amnesty, not for pardon, in the case of the political prison-



Above, armed workers and soldiers demonstrate in Berlin, Jan. 6, 1919, demanding the working class take political power. Inset, revolutionary leaders Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, who fought to advance this course, at German Social Democratic Party congress in 1909.

ers, who had been the prey of the old order. We demanded the right to liberty, to agitation, to revolution for the hundreds of brave and loyal men who groaned in the jails and in the fortresses because, under the former dictatorship of imperialist criminals, they had fought for the people, for peace, and for socialism.

They are all free now.

We find ourselves again in the ranks, ready for the battle.

It was not the clique of [Social Democrat Philip] Scheidemann and his bourgeois allies, with Prince Max of Baden at their head, that liberated us. It was the proletarian revolution that made the doors of our cells spring open.

But another class of unfortunate dwellers in those gloomy mansions has been completely forgotten. No one, at present, thinks of the pale and morbid figures which sigh behind prison walls because of offenses against ordinary law.

Nevertheless these are also the unfortunate victims of the infamous social order against which the revolution is directed—victims of the imperialistic war which pushed distress and misery to the very limit of intolerable torture, victims of that frightful butchery of men which let loose all the vilest instincts.

The justice of the bourgeois classes had again been like a net, which allowed the voracious sharks to escape, while the little sardines were caught. The profi-

teers who have realized millions during the war have been acquitted or let off with ridiculous penalties. The little thieves, men and women, have been punished with sentences of Draconian severity.

Worn out by hunger and cold, in cells which are hardly heated, these derelicts of society await mercy and pity.

They have waited in vain, for in his preoccupation with making the nations cut one another's throats and of distributing crowns, the last of the Hohenzollerns forgot these miserable people, and since the Conquest of Liege there has been no amnesty, not even on the official holiday of German slaves, the kaiser's birthday.

The proletarian revolution ought now, by a little ray of kindness, to illuminate the gloomy life of the prisons, shorten Draconian sentences, abolish barbarous punishments—the use of manacles and whippings—improve, as far as possible, the medical attention, the food allowance, and the conditions of labor. That is a duty of honor!

The existing disciplinary system, which is impregnated with brutal class spirit and with capitalist barbarism, should be radically altered.

But a complete reform, in harmony with the spirit of socialism, can be based only on a new economic and social order; for both crime and punishment have, in the last analysis, their roots deep in

the organization of society. One radical measure, however, can be taken without any elaborate legal process. Capital punishment, the greatest shame of the ultra-reactionary German code, ought to be done away with at once. Why are there any hesitations on the part of this government of workers and soldiers? The noble Beccaria, two hundred years ago, denounced the ignominy of the death penalty. Doesn't its ignominy exist for you, [Social Democrats Georg] Ledebour, [Emil] Barth, [Ernst] Daeumig?

You have no time, you have a thousand cares, a thousand difficulties, a thousand tasks before you? That is true. But mark, watch in hand, how much time would be needed to say: "Capital punishment is abolished!" Would you argue that, on this question also, long discussions followed by votes are necessary? Would you thus lose yourselves in the complications of formalism, in considerations of jurisdiction, in questions of departmental red tape? . . .

The history of the world is not made without grandeur of spirit, without lofty morale, without noble gestures.

Liebknecht and I, on leaving the hospitable halls which we recently inhabited—he, among his pale companions in the penitentiary, I with my dear, poor thieves and women of the streets, with whom I have passed, under the same roof, three years and a half of my life—we took this oath as they followed us with their sad eyes: "We shall not forget you!" We demand of the executive committee of the Council of Workers and Soldiers an immediate amelioration of the lot of all the prisoners in the German jails!

We demand the excision of capital punishment from the German penal code!

During the four years of this slaughter of the peoples, blood has flowed in torrents. Today, each drop of that precious fluid ought to be preserved devotedly in crystal urns.

Revolutionary activity and profound humanitarianism—they alone are the true breath of socialism.

A world must be turned upside down. But each tear that flows, when it could have been spared, is an accusation, and he commits a crime who with brutal in-advertency crushes a poor earthworm.

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April

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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The Militant April 19, 2010

No miner has to die

“In coalfields, work, death in the mines is a way of life,” reads one headline. This message of the coal bosses and their government is a lie. No miner—no worker, period—has to die.

Disasters like the April 5 explosion at a Massey Energy mine in West Virginia are not inevitable. What *is* inevitable is that more lives will be lost as long as mines are not organized and workers don’t use union power to enforce safety on the job.

Miners need union safety committees. They need to be able to use union power to walk off the job when methane levels are too high, as happened at the Massey mine over and over again, or to insist on repairs and proper cleanup when live wires are exposed or coal dust is left to accumulate, also safety violations at the West Virginia mine.

Miners need a union to be able to resist the speed-up of the coal bosses as they seek to squeeze every last penny of profit out of workers. In Massey’s case, the mine tripled coal production in 2009. The number of safety violations more than doubled in the same period, with improper ventilation cited numerous times. Government inspectors dutifully recorded the violations, imposed fines, and walked away from the problem.

In January 2006 an explosion at the Sago mine in West Virginia killed 12 miners, kicking off a year in which 47 perished in U.S. coal mines. Capitalist politicians wrung their hands, federal safety officials vowed to crack down, and coal bosses promised to do better. Congress adopted a new mine safety law, hailed as a major reform.

Now, four years later, coal operator greed has

once again claimed workers’ lives.

The solution is not just more legislation or more inspections. Safety is only guaranteed if it’s in the hands of the workers themselves. That’s true not just for the mines and not just for workers in the United States. An explosion and fire killed five workers at the Tesoro oil refinery in Washington State April 2. Coal mine accidents in China continue to take hundreds of lives. At the Tesoro facility there is a union. But the company is able to appeal corrective action for safety violations, allowing dangerous conditions to continue.

It will take a fighting union movement to halt the mounting threats to life and limb in the mines, refineries, mills, and other industries. That kind of movement arose in the late 1960s in the coalfields, revolutionizing the United Mine Workers union and taking great strides forward for miners’ safety and health.

Such a movement is also capable of defending democratic rights, including the right of miners to speak out against the violations they see every day on the job without fear of retaliation, something that does not exist in the West Virginia mines and communities dominated by the coal bosses.

The coming struggles to unionize the mines and use union power to enforce safety and better work conditions will point to the need for the working class to make a revolution to take the government out of the hands of those who represent coal bosses and other capitalist profiteers. Without bosses, we can organize production to meet human needs without sacrificing workers’ lives.

Miners killed in W. Virginia explosion

Continued from front page

three fines on the mine for ventilation violations. Since 2005 the company has been fined 86 times for improper mine ventilation.

The deadly explosion climaxed more than a year of mounting safety violations as Massey sped up coal production. Inspectors cited 515 violations of regulations in 2009, more than twice the 197 recorded the previous year. Fines tripled. “Coal production also tripled over that period, but hours worked by miners increased by only about 22 percent,” the *Charleston Gazette* reported.

Interviewed after the explosion, Don Blankenship, CEO of Massey, told ABC News, “Anything you do in life has risks.” He insisted to the *Wall Street Journal* that Upper Big Branch was not an unsafe mine. “The safety record in the past three months has been really, really good.”

Andrew Tyler, a 22-year-old electrician who worked as a contractor at the mine two years ago, disputed that claim. “No one will say this who works at that mine, but everyone knows it has been dangerous for years,” he told the *Times*. “I’m willing to go on record because I am a subcontractor who doesn’t depend on Massey for my life.”

Live wires were routinely left exposed in the mine, he said, and coal dust accumulations not cleaned up. Workers often had to put in 12-hour shifts.

Massey’s Web site says it is the fourth largest coal company in the country, based on produced coal revenue. It achieved this standing through decades of union busting against the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) union. In 1984 the company refused to sign a contract with the union. A bitter strike ensued in which the union was defeated. One strike leader, Donnie Thornsberry, is still in prison today. He was convicted in 1987 on frame-up charges of killing a scab coal hauler.

‘Survival of the most productive’

With its defeat of the UMWA, Massey began taking over other mines in West Virginia, and eventually became the biggest coal company in Central Appalachia. It is notorious for ruthlessly suppressing union activity and boosting profits by ignoring safety and environmental standards. Blankenship summed up his philosophy in 1984 this way:

“Unions, communities, people—everybody’s going to have to learn to accept that, in the United States, you have a capitalist society. And that capitalism, from a business viewpoint, is survival of the most productive.”

The anger that has built up over the years against the coal giant burst out when Blankenship appeared at 2:00 a.m. on April 6 to report the death toll to the miners’ families. “Escorted by at least a dozen state and other police officers, according to several witnesses, Mr. Blankenship prepared to address the crowd, but people yelled at him for caring more about profits than miners’ lives,” reported the *Times*. He left in a hurry.

Michelle McKinney’s father, Benny Willingham, died in the explosion, five weeks before his scheduled retirement. She was angered that Massey never contacted the family to report his death. McK-inney found out from a local official at a school nearby. “These guys, they took a chance every day to work and make [Massey] big. And they couldn’t even call us,” she told the Associated Press.

U.S. president Barack Obama issued a statement April 6 saying that “the federal government stands ready to offer whatever assistance is needed in this rescue effort.” But it is the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) that has turned a blind eye to Massey’s flouting of safety regulations for years.

MSHA records show three miners have died at the Upper Big Branch mine in the last 12 years, one from electrocution, one from a roof fall, and another when a rock fell on him. In every year but one since 2002, the mine has had a higher than national average accident rate. The company routinely ignored fines. Massey “was fighting many of the steepest fines or simply refusing to pay them,” ABC News reports.

In 2008 Massey pled guilty to 10 criminal counts stemming from a January 2006 fire in its Aracoma mine in West Virginia that killed workers Don Bragg and Ellery Hatfield. The company admitted it did not provide the required escape tunnels, removed some permanent ventilation controls without replacing them, and faked safety records. It paid \$4.2 million in fines, the biggest financial settlement in coal industry history, according to ABC.

War in Pakistan

Continued from front page

U.S. special forces and CIA operatives have been capturing and assassinating Taliban leaders throughout the province, Steve Coll reported in the *New Yorker*.

In addition to U.S. troops, 41 other governments have a total of 38,900 soldiers in Afghanistan—32,000 of which are from the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, Canada, Poland, Netherlands, Turkey, Australia, and Spain.

Meanwhile, the Pakistani government launched a military offensive March 23 in the tribal agency of Orakzai, where many Taliban combatants and al-Qaeda allies reportedly fled during operations in other parts of the tribal areas. Pakistani officials say they killed more than 200 Taliban in the first eight days.

The offensive is being carried out by the paramilitary Frontier Corps, which recruits from the Pashtun tribal areas of Pakistan and operates in the western regions bordering Afghanistan and Iran.

Maj. Gen. Tariq Khan, the Frontier Corps’ top commander, told McClatchy Newspapers that a series of smaller operations led by Pakistan’s regular army were taking place in North Waziristan Agency. Sporadic fighting continues in Pakistan’s five other tribal agencies, which Khan says have been brought under government control.

Khan said the initial “clearing” phase would last a couple months. Supplied with weapons from Washington, Pakistani troops have been relying heavily on air and artillery strikes in order to “spare us the troops”—a method that has resulted in high civilian casualties.

After “clearing” the two agencies, Khan said that he will place more “boots on the ground” to sweep through the tribal region house-by-house. Following Washington’s “counterinsurgency” strategy, the Pakistani government is seeking \$1 billion in aid to repair and develop the area to win support for the government and its fight against the Taliban.

As in previous operations, the local population is caught in the crossfire. Pakistan’s *News* reported March 31 that according to local sources Taliban in Orakzai had destroyed a health clinic, two public schools, and 15 houses of government supporters. The sources also described Frontier Corps shelling two homes in which more than half of the casualties were women.

More than 30 percent of Orakzai’s population of 450,000 has been displaced as a result of the offensive. Some 198,000 had been registered by the United Nations as of April 2, having fled east from Orakzai and neighboring Kurram Agency to Hangu and Kohat districts outside the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. This number is increasing by about 800 families (roughly 4,500 individuals) per day.

In Tank, a district adjacent to North Waziristan, the government issued an indefinite curfew March 31, another practice that has placed hardships on the population.

In the past, North Waziristan has not been a focus of Pakistani military operations. It is a base of operations for the Haqqani network, a major U.S. adversary in the Afghan war and longtime “strategic asset” of Islamabad. It is also home to a faction of the Pakistani Taliban led by Hafiz Gul Bahadur, also a U.S. enemy. The Pakistani government maintained a peace agreement with Gul Bahadur during its operations in South Waziristan last year.

All of Washington’s aerial drone strikes in Pakistan this year have been aimed at disrupting these two groups in North Waziristan, while Pakistani forces have gone after antigovernment Islamist groups in the surrounding area.

In the first three months of this year Washington has conducted 26 drone attacks, more than any other such period since the war began, and double the average rate in 2009.

The Barack Obama administration is the first to publicly acknowledge and defend the strikes. The State Department’s top lawyer recently declared them “legal” and the resulting civilian casualties justified, as long as they are not “excessive” in relation to the military benefit gained.